



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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KING MACKEREL COMMERCIAL FISHERY CLOSED IN WESTERN GULF OF MEXICO FROM U.S./MEXICO BORDER TO ALABAMA/FLORIDA BOUNDARY

The commercial fishery for Gulf group king mackerel in the western zone is **closed, effective 12:00 noon (local time) March 27, 2009**, through June 30, 2009. NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service has determined the 2008/2009 western zone commercial quota of 1.01 million pounds of king mackerel has been reached. With this action, the king mackerel commercial fishery in the Gulf of Mexico is closed from the U.S./Mexico border to the Alabama/Florida boundary.

Closure of the commercial king mackerel fishery in the western Gulf of Mexico complies with regulations implemented under the Fishery Management Plan for Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic and is necessary to protect the Gulf group king mackerel resource. In cooperative actions, Gulf states (Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama) are expected to close commercial harvest of king mackerel concurrently in adjoining state waters.

During the closure period, no person aboard a vessel for which a commercial permit for king mackerel has been issued may fish for or retain Gulf

group king mackerel in or from federal waters of the closed subzone. There is one exception, however, for a person aboard a charter vessel or headboat. A person aboard a vessel that has a valid charter/headboat permit for coastal migratory pelagic fish and a commercial king mackerel permit may continue to retain king mackerel in or from the closed subzone under the 2-fish daily bag limit, provided the vessel is operating as a charter vessel or headboat. Charter vessels or headboats that hold a commercial king mackerel permit are considered to be operating as a charter vessel or headboat when they carry a passenger who pays a fee or when more than three persons are aboard, including operator and crew.

During the closure, no king mackerel caught in the closed zone/subzone may be purchased, bartered, traded, or sold. This includes recreational and tournament-caught fish. The prohibition of sale, however, does not apply to trade in king mackerel that were harvested, landed ashore and bartered, traded, or sold before the closure and held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.